(b) if so, the total amount payable by the DOT to the Hindustan Cable Ltd. (HCL) as on 30.6.1997 and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether HCL is starved of orders from DOT; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the nature and extent of the held up orders ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Barring orders placed in the current years there is no admissible claim pending.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Introduction of Passenger Trains

352. SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are considering to fulfil the demand of the people of North-Eastern States by introducing the passenger trains from different parts of North-Eastern States to Calcutta;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to run Saraighat Express daily as a first step; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (c) Provision of additional services is a continuous process on Indian Railways subject to the availability of resources, operational feasibility and traffic justification. During 1997-98 extension of 5659/5660 Kamrup Express to Dibrugarh and extension of 6511/6512 Bangalore-Howrah weekly Express to Guwahati will provide additional services from the North-Eastern States to Calcutta. There is, however, no proposal to run Saraighat Express as a daily train.

Construction of Fly Overs

353. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have since taken any steps to increase the speed of the trains between Howrah and Bandel and between Howrah and Kharagpur by constructing few fly-overs and removing the rail gates;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the progress, made in this regard, so gar ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) Three busy level crossings are sanctioned for replacement with Road Over Bridges/Road Under Bridges. In addition the State Government has been asked to sponsor proposals on two busy level crossings i.e. Bagnan and Ramrajatala.

(c)(i) Road Under Bridge at Konnagar sanctioned in 1995-96 has progressed upto 50%.

(ii) Road Over Bridge at Liluah sanctioned in 1988-89 but the State Govt. has not fulfilled the conditions to take up the work.

(iii) Road Over Bridge at Maurigram sanctioned during 1997-98. The State Govt. is yet to confirm site to enable Railway to start the work.

Wages to E.D. Employees

354. SHRI A. SAMPATH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Department of Posts had issued orders on November 27, 1996 condoning the period of absence from October 23, 1996 to October 29, 1996 of Postal Employees including the Extra-Departmental Employees;

(b) whether the Departmental Employees were paid the wages after treating the period of absence as on leave;

(c) whether inspite of the period of absence having been condoned, the extra-departmental employees have been denied wages for the period of absence;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether representations have been received for payment of wages for the period of absence to the extra-departmental employees; and

(f) if so, whether the Government are favourably considering the request for payment of wages for the period of absence to the extra-departmental employees ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.